

**TESTIMONY  
BEFORE THE  
HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE  
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
FEBRUARY 14th, 2013**

Good Afternoon Senator Bye, Representative Willis and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. My name is Laura Cummings and I am testifying today on behalf of the Connecticut Business and Industry Association. CBIA's 10,000 member companies represent the broad diversity of Connecticut's businesses, and the vast majority of our members are small companies with fewer than 50 employees.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of **H.B. 6365 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ISSUANCE OF INITIAL TEACHER CERTIFICATES TO GRADUATES OF THE CONNECTICUT ALTERNATIVE ROUTE TO CERTIFICATION PROGRAM.**

This bill seeks to allow any person who has graduated from the summer or weekend and evening Alternate Route to Certification Program administered by the Office of Higher Education to be eligible to receive an initial teacher certificate. **CBIA supports H.B. 6365** as a way to improve the quality of Connecticut's teaching force.

The Alternate Route to Certification Program (ARC) prepares talented, well-educated adults to become certified teachers in Connecticut public schools. ARC was created in 1986 to encourage mid-career adults with strong subject area backgrounds to become teachers, and currently focuses on addressing areas of teacher shortage.

This program is a way for those who would like to become Connecticut teacher, but cannot take three to four years out of their lives to enter a university based program, to do so. One example, Patricia, a mid-career entrant to the ARC program from a scientific field, was attracted to the abbreviated program which fit well with her family's needs and financial constraints. She explained that the fact that she could get her initial certification in one summer - allowing her to commit three months of her life as opposed to three years - was appealing as it fit with her family's needs, schedule and financial situation.

The Alternate Route to Certification Program has specific preliminary requirements for applicants, including:

- BA degree from an accredited institution, with a major in the intended teaching field
- "B" grade point average
- Passing score on the Praxis I examination
- Passing score on the Praxis II examination

Thus, only well qualified candidates are invited to participate in the program.

We know from research that teachers are one of the most important school-based factors for driving student achievement, and excellent teachers can transform children's lives. As the Alternative Route to Certification Program offers a way for those who have developed strong subject matter knowledge and acquired prior professional experience to become engaged in Connecticut classrooms, CBIA supports **H.B. 6365** as a way to improve the quality of Connecticut's teaching force.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify on this important matter.